



CONSUMER ALERT

Are You Eligible For The 2004 Home Heating Credit?



The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) doesn't want you to miss your chance to receive the Home Heating Credit (HHC) from the state of Michigan! If you are eligible, an HHC will help you pay your winter heating bills. The HHC is funded by federal Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) grants. Many eligible low-income consumers either do not know about the credit or fail to take advantage of it. If you use a large portion of your monthly income to pay heating costs, you may be eligible for the HHC for the 2004 tax year. The size of the credit may change from year to year depending on the amount of Michigan's LIHEAP funding, however last year, the average credit was approximately \$170.

Who can apply?

Eligible customers must meet the following guidelines:

- + Your homestead is in Michigan,
- + You own or rent the home (including a rented apartment or mobile home on a lot in a mobile home park) where you live, and
- + Your income is within the following limits:

<i>Number of Exemptions*</i>	<i>Maximum Income</i>
1	\$10,257
2	\$13,771
3	\$17,257
4	\$20,771
5	\$24,257
6	\$27,771

**Note: Add \$3,498 for each additional exemption. Special exemptions are available if you are deaf, blind, a person with a disability, or age 65 or older.*

Customers who qualify for the credit may also be eligible for the Winter Protection Plan. Contact your local utility for more information.

How to apply?

You can apply for the Home Heating Credit by filling out form MI-1040CR-7 for 2004. You do not have to file a Michigan tax return to apply for the Home Heating Credit. There are many ways to get a Home Heating Credit form:

- If you received a Home Heating Credit for tax year 2003, you should get a 2004 HHC form in the mail in early January, 2005.
- Forms also will be available on the Michigan Department of Treasury's website (www.michigan.gov/treasury) at the beginning of January.
- You can file for your credit on line. Visit the Department of Treasury website at www.Mlfastfile.org for additional information.
- You can call the Department of Treasury at 800-827-4000 to receive a copy.
- By early February, paper copies of the forms will be available at most public libraries, Northern Michigan post offices, Secretary of State branch offices, Family Independence Agency offices, and other locations where income tax forms are available.
- If you have a hearing or speech impairment, you may call 517-636-4999 (TTY).

Some electric and natural gas utility companies have forms available and personnel who can help you complete the forms; call your company to see if they will assist you. Your utility company may also know of agencies that can help you complete the form.

When to apply?

It is best to file your Home Heating Credit form as soon as you know your household income for 2004. The sooner you file the form, the sooner you will get the credit. Forms filed before April 15, 2005 will receive priority in processing. **The deadline for filing the forms is September 30, 2005.**

Before you send your completed application, check to make sure it is complete and accurate. Make a copy of it and keep the copy with your records, noting the day you mailed it.

If you are eligible for an HHC and are a customer of an energy utility regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission or an alternative energy supplier, you can also participate in the Winter Protection Plan. Contact your utility company or alternative energy supplier for details.

If you have trouble paying your heating bills while you are waiting for the credit and receive a shut-off notice, call your utility company immediately and tell the service representative that you submitted a Home Heating Credit form. If your utility company is regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission, you cannot have your heat shut-off while you are waiting for your energy credit.

When will you get the credit?

It will take the Michigan Department of Treasury several weeks from the time it receives the claim form to process until you receive your energy credit. Once you have filed your credit, you can check on its status by calling 800-827-4000. Remember to file your HHC form early.